IN THE CLAIMS:
Please amend the claims, as follows:

1. (Previously presented) An illumination apparatus comprising:

an LED light source;

a light guide plate having a groove portion for receiving said LED light source, and character portions formed by convex portions with desired shapes, said character portions being provided on a back surface of said light guide plate; and

a base member covering said back surface and said groove portion of said light guide plate, said base member being bonded to said light guide plate in a circumferential edge portion of said base member,

wherein said convex portions are formed as a raised portion of said light guide plate.

2. (Original Claim) An illumination apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said groove portion is formed in said back surface of said light guide plate.

3. (Previously presented) An illumination apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said light guide plate and said base member comprise a same material, said illumination apparatus further comprising:

a portion of said material being welded together for bonding said light guide plate and said base member together.

4. (Previously presented) An illumination apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said character portions includes convex portions, and a second groove portion is provided in said

back surface of said light guide plate so as to follow outer circumferences of said convex portions.

5. (Previously presented) An illumination apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein a metal layer is formed on said character portions or on said back surface of said light guide plate except portions where said character portions are formed.

6. (Currently amended) An ~~illuminated~~ illumination apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein a light emission observable surface of said base member has a light reflection property.

7. (Previously presented) An illumination apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said illumination apparatus comprises a scuff plate that will be installed on a side step portion of a car.

8. (Previously presented) An illumination apparatus comprising:

an LED light source;

a light guide plate having a groove portion for receiving said LED light source, and character portions formed by convex portions with desired shapes, said character portions being provided on a back surface of said light guide plate; and

a base member covering said back surface and said groove portion of said light guide plate,

wherein said base member is hermetically bonded to said light guide plate in a circumferential edge portion of said base member, thereby hermetically sealing said LED light

source, and wherein said convex portions are formed as a raised portion of said light guide plate.

9. (Original Claim) An illumination apparatus according to Claim 8, wherein said groove portion is formed in said back surface of said light guide plate.

10. (Previously presented) An illumination apparatus according to Claim 8, wherein said light guide plate and said base member comprise a same material, said illumination apparatus further comprising a length of said material being welded together for bonding said light guide plate and said base member together.

11. (Original Claim) An illumination apparatus according to Claim 8, wherein said character portions include convex portions, and a second groove portion is provided in said back surface of said light guide plate so as to follow outer circumferences of said convex portions.

12. (Previously presented) An illumination apparatus according to Claim 8, wherein a metal layer is formed on said character portions or on said back surface of said light guide plate except portions where said character portions are formed.

13. (Previously presented) An illumination apparatus according to Claim 8, wherein a light emission observable surface of said base member has a light reflection property.

14. (Previously presented) An illumination apparatus according to Claim 8, wherein said illumination apparatus comprises a scuff plate that will be installed on a side step portion of a car.

15. (Previously presented) An illumination apparatus according to Claim 8, wherein a flange portion is formed in a circumferential edge portion of said light guide plate, and an end wall of said circumferential edge portion of said base member is bonded to said flange portion.

16. (Previously presented) An illumination apparatus according to Claim 8, further comprising:

a light permeable sheet member provided on an emission observable surface side of said light guide plate.

17-18. (Canceled)

19. (Currently amended) An illumination apparatus comprising:

a case;

a light source located along one side wall of said case; and

a light guide plate receiving light from said light source through a first face, said light guide plate having character portions with desired shapes, said character portions being formed by ~~at least one of~~ concave portions ~~or convex portions~~, said character portions being provided on a front surface of said light guide plate,

wherein said concave portions are integrally formed with said light guide plate as a

recessed portion of said light guide plate ~~and said convex portions are formed as a raised portion of said light guide plate~~.

20. (Currently amended) The illumination apparatus of claim 19, further comprising:

a protective transparent cover sheet covering said light guide plate, said protective transparent cover sheet being bonded to said case to provide a seal.